

SPECIAL FEATURE NO. 3-1385  
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FOREIGN FILMS AND THE 50TH ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS  
(VOICED VERSION AND INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: THE SENSE OF ANTICIPATION IS HEIGHTENING IN HOLLYWOOD, AS FILM MAKERS LOOK TOWARD THIS YEAR'S AWARDS FROM THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES. (TO BE PRESENTED MONDAY, APRIL 3) THE "OSCAR" STATUETTE HAS A SPECIAL MEANING THIS YEARS BECAUSE IT IS THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AWARDS FOR DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT. AS IN PAST YEARS, FIVE FILMS FROM ABROAD ARE IN THE COMPETITION. FROM VOA WEST COAST CORRESPONDENT RAY KABAKER COMES THIS SPECIAL REPORT ON THIS YEAR'S ENTRIES IN THAT CATEGORY.

VOICE: THE "BEST FOREIGN FILM" AWARD CAME TO THE OSCAR CEREMONY IN 1947, WHEN THE ITALIAN FILM MAKER VITTORIO DE SICA ACCEPTED A SPECIAL AWARD FOR THE FILM "SHOE SHINE." SINCE THEN, ITALY HAS BEEN NAMED WINNER SIX TIMES, TIED WITH FRANCE FOR THE MOST AWARDS OVER THE YEARS. BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE ENTRIES IN THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION, ALONG WITH SPAIN, GREECE AND ISRAEL. JAPAN HAS WON THE AWARD FOUR TIMES, ONCE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION. SWEDEN AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAVE EACH WON TWO "BEST FOREIGN FILM" OSCARS, THE USSR TOOK THE AWARD IN 1968 FOR "WAR AND PEACE," AND THE IVORY COAST WON LAST YEAR WITH THE FIRST FEATURE-LENGTH MOVIE PRODUCED IN THAT COUNTRY, "BLACK AND WHITE IN COLOR."

UNTIL 1956 WINNING FOREIGN FILMS WERE GIVEN HONORARY OR SPECIAL AWARDS, BUT SINCE THEN THEY HAVE BEEN PART OF THE ANNUAL COMPETITION IN ONE OF THE TWENTY-TWO CATEGORIES THAT RANGE FROM "BEST ACTING PERFORMANCE" TO "BEST SHORT

VOICE: DOCUMENTARY" TO "BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY." FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
(CONT'D) FILMS CAN BE NOMINATED IN ANY CATEGORY EXCEPT BEST PICTURE,  
PROVIDING THEY MEET THE REQUIREMENTS. THE RULES IN THE  
FOREIGN FILM CATEGORY ARE THAT THE FILM MUST HAVE BEEN  
PRODUCED FOR COMMERCIAL SCREENING IN ITS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN,  
AND THAT IT MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM WITH  
ENGLISH SUBTITLES. ACADEMY MEMBERS WHO VOTE FOR THE BEST  
FOREIGN FILM ARE REQUIRED TO SEE ALL FIVE, WHICH ARE SHOWN  
AT SPECIAL SCREENINGS IN THE ACADEMY'S THEATRE HERE IN  
BEVERLY HILLS.

BECAUSE OF THE SCREENING PROCEDURE, ONLY THE BEST FILMS FROM  
ABROAD COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY, SINCE  
THEY MUST BE ENDORSED FIRST BY THE APPROPRIATE PANELS IN  
THEIR OWN COUNTRIES-- AND ONLY ONE FILM FROM ANY COUNTRY IS  
ACCEPTED. THIS YEAR THERE WERE ENTRIES FROM TWENTY-FOUR  
COUNTRIES. THE FILMS WERE AUDITIONED BY A SPECIAL COMMITTEE  
OF 150 PEOPLE AT THE ACADEMY, WHO CHOSE THE FIVE FINALISTS.  
THE ACADEMY INVITES ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH FINALIST  
COUNTRY TO ATTEND THE CEREMONY. THE AWARD IS GIVEN FOR THE  
FILM, NOT FOR INDIVIDUAL EFFORT. BALLOTING, OF COURSE, IS  
STRICTLY SECRET UNTIL THAT MAGIC MOMENT ON STAGE AT THE MUSIC  
CENTER IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES, WHEN SOMEONE WILL OPEN A  
SEALED ENVELOPE TO SAY: "AND THE WINNER IS..." BUT VOA  
TALKED TO THE CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE FOREIGN FILM COMMITTEE AND  
GOT SOME CAPSULE COMMENTS. GEORGE CUKOR, (KEW-KOR) THE  
NOTED DIRECTOR WHOSE CREDITS INCLUDE "CAMILLE," "GASLIGHT,"  
"A STAR IS BORN" AND "MY FAIR LADY," COMMENTS ON THE  
ITALIAN ENTRY, "A SPECIAL DAY," A LOVE STORY SET AGAINST THE

VOICE: BACKGROUND OF A MEETING BETWEEN ADOLPH HITLER AND BENITO  
(CONT'D) MUSSOLINI IN MAY OF 1938.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- CUKOR

"WELL I THINK IT'S MOST MOVINGLY DONE. IN THE BACKGROUND YOU SEE THE CRUELTY AND STUPIDITY OF FASCISM, BUT IT IS BRILLIANTLY PLAYED BY THESE TWO VERY SYMPATHETIC PEOPLE WHO GIVE PERFORMANCES OF GREAT RANGE. /YOU SEE THE STUPIDITY OF MUSSOLINI AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THAT DAY AND HOW STUPID PEOPLE WERE, AND IN CONTRAST YOU SEE THESE TWO LITTLE PEOPLE AND THEN YOU SEE THE HEROISM OF MASTROIANNI. AND THEY'VE GOT THEIR TWO MOST ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE DOING THAT. MAYBE IF THESE PEOPLE WERE NOT THAT INTERESTING, THAT FASCINATING, MAYBE THE PROPAGANDA WOULD COME OUT FURTHER. BUT IT'S A MOST MOVING DOCUMENT OF THAT PERIOD." /

VOICE: MARCELLO MASTROIANNI AND SOPHIA LOREN ARE THE STARS OF "A SPECIAL DAY." LOOKING AT THE ENTRY FROM SPAIN, DIRECTED BY LUIS BUNUEL (BOON YOU ELL), MISTER CUKOR CONFESSES TO BE JUST AS CONFUSED AS ANYONE ELSE, "THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE" IS A STORY OF PAINFUL ROMANCE SET AMID TERRORIST STREET BOMBINGS, WITH A HEROINE PLAYED BY TWO ACTRESSES. IT IS INDEED OBSCURE.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- CUKOR

"I DIDN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND WHY THEY WERE THROWING BOMBS. AND I NEVER QUESTIONED IT, IT WAS SO MASTERLY. I NEVER QUESTIONED VARIOUS THINGS IN THE FILM. THERE'S A DOUBLE HEROINE. AND I TOLD BUNUEL, I SAID, 'YOU ARE SO PERSUASIVE THAT WHEN I SAW THESE THINGS I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND I SAID IT WAS MY STUPIDITY; HE'S OBVIOUSLY RIGHT.' BUT I THINK THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO, REALLY, WITH THE THRUST AND THE AMUSEMENT. IT'S A VERY DIFFICULT FILM AND DONE BRILLIANTLY."

VOICE: DIFFICULTY ON A WHOLLY DIFFERENT SCALE IS APPARENT IN THE GREEK ENTRY IN THIS YEAR'S BEST FOREIGN FILM COMPETITION FOR THE OSCAR. "IPHIGENIA" (IFFY-GAYNIA) IS AN EPIC BASED ON THE EURIPIDES PLAY ABOUT KING AGAMEMNON'S LOSS OF HIS DAUGHTER AS A CONSEQUENCE OF HIS WAR AGAINST TROY. IT IS

VOICE: CLASSIC GREEK TRAGEDY, AND MISTER CUKOR'S CO-CHAIRMAN,  
(CONT'D) ROBERT VOGEL, THINKS THE FILM ACHIEVES ITS PURPOSE.

TAPE: CUT THREE VOGEL

"I THINK IT COMES OFF MAGNIFICENTLY. I THINK THIS A TREMENDOUSLY DIFFICULT TYPE OF PICTURE TO MAKE, TO HAVE IT BELIEVABLE, TO HAVE THESE PEOPLE SHOWN IN THEIR DAY AND YET STILL BE INTELLIGIBLE TO TODAY'S AUDIENCE, AND I THINK CACOYANNIS HAS DONE A MAGNIFICENT JOB."

VOICE: MICHAEL CACOYANNIS IS THE DIRECTOR OF "IPHIGENIA," WHICH STARS IRENE PAPPAS AS AGAMEMONON'S WIFE, CLYMENESTRA. ANOTHER STRONG FEMALE PERFORMANCE IS EVIDENT IN "MADAME ROSA," A FILM FROM FRANCE: AN EARTHY STUDY OF A FADING MADAM WHOSE LATER YEARS ARE TAKEN UP WITH RUNNING A HOME FOR CHILDREN OF STREETWALKERS. IT'S A VEHICLE FOR SIMONE SIGNORET. GEORGE CUKOR SAYS NOTHING SHOULD BE TAKEN AWAY FROM THE SKILLFUL WRITING AND DIRECTING OF THE FILM, BUT SIMONE SIGNORET'S PERFORMANCE IS TRULY REMARKABLE.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- CUKOR

"SHE IS A MOST MARVELOUS ACTRESS, AND IT'S SO INTERESTING: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN HER PLAY A CHARACTER PART, WHICH SHE DOES WITHOUT ANY NONSENSE, WITHOUT ANY VANITY."

VOICE: "OPERATION THUNDERBOLT" IS THE ISRAELI ENTRY THAT DRAMATIZES THE RAID ON ENTEBBE AIRPORT IN UGANDA IN 1976, WHEN ISRAELI FORCES RESCUED JEWISH HOSTAGES TAKEN IN A TERRORIST HJACKING. IT WAS PRODUCED WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, AND IS THE MOST TOPICAL OF THE FIVE FOREIGN FILMS COMPETING FOR THE YEAR'S "OSCAR." GEORGE CUKOR CALLS IT A GOOD ADVENTURE DRAMA, AND MISTER VOGEL AGREES THAT ITS IMPACT LIES NOT SO MUCH IN ITS POLITICAL PERTINENCE AS IN ITS HUMANIZING OF A STORY THAT MADE HEADLINES.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- VOGEL

"I WAS VERY INTERESTED IN THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAPPENED TO TALK ABOUT IF AFTER THEY HAD SEEN IT, MEMBERS OF OUR SCREENING COMMITTEE. THEY HAD SEEN THE SAME SUBJECT ON TELEVISION TWICE, AND BOTH TIMES VERY WELL DONE, AND EVERY COMMENT THAT I HEARD WAS: 'THIS IS BETTER THAN THE OTHER TWO GOOD ONES BECAUSE WE GET DOWN TO MEETING AND FEELING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE. IT'S A VERY HUMAN, WARM STORY."

VOICE: THAT IS THE COMMENT OF ROBERT VOGEL, A MOVIE EXECUTIVE OF MANY YEARS EXPERIENCE WITH FOREIGN FILMS. HE AND GEORGE CUKOR THE DIRECTOR, ARE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE FOREIGN FILM COMMITTEE THAT CHOSE THE FIVE FINALISTS IN THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION FOR THE ACADEMY AWARD FOR THE BEST FOREIGN FILM, THAT CEREMONY TAKES PLACE APRIL THIRD IN LOS ANGELES, AND IT'LL BE SEEN ON TELEVISION BY AN ESTIMATED TWO HUNDRED FIFTY MILLION PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD.

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